Bird’s-Eye View
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BIRD’S-EYE VIEW

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Bird’s-Eye View is published to share the joy of backyard birds with All Seasons Wild Bird Store’s customers and friends.

BIRD’S-EYE VIEW

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAKS:
Dashing Beauties

Plants for Pollinators

Late Summer Checklist

By Wayzata Manager MELISSA BLOCK

We’ve all heard about the declining populations of our bees and butterflies. Many of North America’s more than 4,000 species of bees are in decline. Butterflies are losing habitat at an alarming rate. We can help by planting a pollinator-friendly garden in our own backyard. You don’t need a lot of space to start a pollinator garden. Planting a few pots of flowers can attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.

Why We Need Pollinators

Animals pollinate 75% of the 1,300 types of plants grown worldwide for food, beverages, medicines and spices. Pollinators are critical to the reproduction of up to 90% of the world’s flowering plants.

Life Essentials

Like people, our pollinator friends need the basics of life: food, water, and shelter. To a pollinator that means flower nectar and pollen, a water supply, and adequate shelter to hide from predators and to get out of the elements. Butterflies like to gather at shallow pools, mud puddles or birdbaths, where they gracefully sip the water. An ideal watering hole for a bee is a shallow puddle, like those found in flat rocks.

Selecting Plants for Pollinators

Choose a variety of flower colors and shapes that bloom at different times of the year to provide nectar and pollen sources throughout the growing season to a variety of pollinators. The greater diversity you offer, the more pollinators you will attract. Plant flowers in larger clumps rather than just planting single plants.

Tip: The Importance of Color and Shape

Flower colors can be important. For instance, we know that hummingbirds are attracted to red, fuchsia and purple. Studies have shown that butterflies are attracted to red, orange and yellow.

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WOW! Thank you to all who came out and celebrated with us during our 25th Anniversary Sale in May. It was a super busy and really fun month for all of us here.

There must be some very happy birds around the Twin Cities and beyond as they have oodles of new feeders and tons—yes, literally tons—of new seed to eat: you hauled away about 24 TONS of Joe’s Mix. Just to give you an example, that’s 48,000 pounds!

We’re proud of our 25-year accomplishment and received many well wishes from so many of you. We owe you a truly heartfelt thank you for all of it. Without you, our generous, kind, loyal, bird-loving customers, this wouldn’t still be happening.

We also want to acknowledge our amazing staff for sticking with us for so long. We have great folks working here that really care about customer service as well as feeding wild birds. Thank you for all you do.

We’re grateful to be an exception in the vastly changing retail world and hope to be around for a long time to come.

Al and Dave Netten

Worry-Free Guarantee!

We want our customers to have a worry-free experience with every purchase. If you’re not completely satisfied with any item purchased from our store, simply return it to us for an exchange or refund.

No worries . . . ever.

Join the conversation online!

Visit our Facebook page to post photos, ask questions and be the first to know about upcoming sales and events.
With a brilliant red chevron on its breast, the male Rose-breasted Grosbeak is a showstopper. Enjoy the spectacle while it lasts. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks nest throughout Minnesota, and some yards are fortunate enough to host two broods of young each year. During this time, it’s a joy to watch them at our feeders.

**Identification**
Smaller than the American Robin and larger than the House Finch, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are stocky, medium-sized birds of 7–8 inches. They have a broad chest, short neck and medium-length tail. Their large ivory bill is excellent for crushing seeds.

The size and shape of the rosy triangular chevron on the white breast of the male varies considerably and can be used to identify individual birds. The males have a black head, wing linings of a rosy pink and broad white wing bars.

The females are streaked with brown, have white wing bars, orange-yellow wing linings and a large white eyebrow. At first glance they resemble a larger version of a female sparrow or a Red-winged Blackbird female. Juveniles look more like females. These birds molt twice a year with a partial molt before spring migration and a complete molt in August. After the August molt the males are not as brilliant in color.

**Song**
Most often heard before seen, the males arrive around the second week of May from Mexico, Central or South America. They begin singing in earnest when females arrive a few days later. Both males and females sing, but the males are louder and more persistent. The song is robin-like only more operatic, with rambling series of loud whistles. They also call to one another with a loud “chink” that sounds like the sole of a basketball shoe on the court.

**Nesting and Behavior**
Nest building begins about a week after grosbeak arrival to breeding territory. Males defend an area of two to three acres. The nest is a flimsy, loose structure taking two to three days to build from twigs and may contain horse, pet or human hair. Found on a fork in the dense foliage of a deciduous or evergreen tree, the nest is most often 10–15 feet above the ground along forest edges, woodlands or urban wooded areas. When the nest is observed from the ground, you can often see the sky through it.

The average clutch size is four, but nests can have three to six eggs. The eggs are oval pale green or bluish green, with irregular brown spots more densely concentrated at the larger end of the egg. The eggs are incubated for 13–14 days by both adults. When the eggs hatch the nestlings remain in the nest for 9–12 days before fledging. A mating pair of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks can have two broods of young each year.

Unfortunately, they are often unwitting cowbird hosts.

In order to begin building the second nest, the female may leave the young of the first brood while they’re still nestlings. The second nest can be as close as 30 feet from the first nest. At the very end of the nesting cycle, the male adult assumes all care for the first brood until they fledge. The young birds will fly a short distance from the nest and call a noisy “too you,” begging to be fed. After two to three weeks, the parent birds become more forceful during feeding and may chase the young short distances to break up the family group.

When Rose-breasted Grosbeaks first arrive, you may see several males on seed feeders in your backyard. As with most songbirds, once the females arrive, the males become more territorial. As a result, you may notice fewer grosbeaks in total as male and female pairs feed together. Once the young leave the nest they often accompany the adults to the feeding station. A birdbath is a welcome feature and will give you a chance to see these gorgeous birds while they bathe and preen.

**Attracting**
Because of their stocky size, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks tend to favor tube feeders with U-shaped perches and/or trays attached, fly-through hanging trays and platform feeders. Their bulky bills are designed to open hard-shelled seeds. Some of their favorite foods are black oil sunflower seeds, golden safflower, white safflower and peanuts out of the shell. Additional food items that may entice these birds include fruit, mealworms (to feed their young) and suet pellets.
The shape of flowers is also important. Butterflies and bees usually need to land before feeding, and because of that they like flat, open flowers. Hummingbirds hover so they like tubular flowers.

**A Word About Native Plants**
Always choose native plants whenever possible. These plants have adapted with our climate and environment and our native bees and butterflies have adapted to these plants. Never use pesticides or herbicides of any kind in a pollinator garden. Even organic pesticides can be potentially harmful to pollinators, especially bees. For more information, please visit our website, WildBirdStore.com, and click on “Bird Habitat Guide” in the left-hand column.

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**BEE QUIZ**
Test your bee knowledge with these questions from Marty Anderson, apiarist (beekeeper), retired DNR wildlife specialist and full-time hobby farmer.

1. Besides plant nectar, bees also collect honeydew.
   a) True  b) False

2. Bees will forage up to ___ mile(s) or more.
   a) 0.5 miles  b) 1.5 miles  c) 3 miles

3. What much-loved Minnesota songbird favors bees?
   a) American Robin  b) Purple Martin  c) Rose-breasted Grosbeak

4. From what spring flowering tree do bees first collect nectar?
   a) oak  b) red maple  c) willow

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**GREAT IDEAS**

**Trays & Platforms**

Easy Access for All Songbirds

Adding a tray to a tube-style birdseed feeder makes it cardinal-friendly and provides easier access for Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Mourning Doves. Cardinals prefer to face directly forward toward their food, allowing for greater bilateral vision and better flight defense should a hawk or other predator enter the yard. Using a tray on a tube feeder eliminates waste by capturing falling seed.

**Aspects® BigFoot Tray**

A good tray option is the Aspects® 12-inch BigFoot Tray. This clear tray is made of durable polycarbonate. It fits all Aspects Quick-Clean® tubular feeders and attaches simply and quickly.

**Birds Choice™ Recycled Tray Feeder**

This hanging tray is made from durable 98% recycled material and won’t fade, crack or split. The mesh bottom allows rain to drain through, keeping the seed, suet pellet and fruit drier and fresher while avoiding mold and mildew. The S hook on the collapsible steel rods ensure the feeder hangs straight.

**Droll Yankees® Platform Feeder**

This clear feeder allows birds to access food from all directions and provides a quick exit if a predator should appear. The durable, UV-stabilized polycarbonate material won’t yellow. With an adjustable cover, this feeder helps protect the seed from weather. It works great for feeding seeds, mealworms, suet pellets and fruit.

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Have an idea for a future issue of **Birds-Eye View**? Photos and articles may be submitted by email to info@wildbirdstore.net. Sign up for our weekly e-newsletter at WildBirdStore.com to receive information about backyard birding, store events and exclusive discounts.